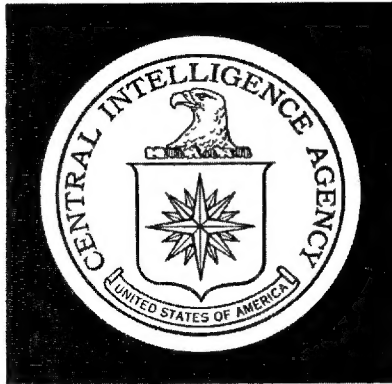


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

Top Secret
119

11 December 1967

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Information as of 1600
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HIGHLIGHTS

The Soviets have issued an official statement of concern over the possibility of an extension of the war into Cambodia and Laos.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:

An estimated full Viet Cong battalion attacked three US positions in the delta on 10 December (Paras. 1-3). [redacted] re-
vealed Viet Cong leaders' concern about the deteriorating situation in Phu Yen Province last summer and perhaps explain the apparent high priority given to enemy operations in the province this fall (Paras. 4-7). [redacted]

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[redacted] the use of North Vietnamese cadre in the South (Paras. 8-10).

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II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:

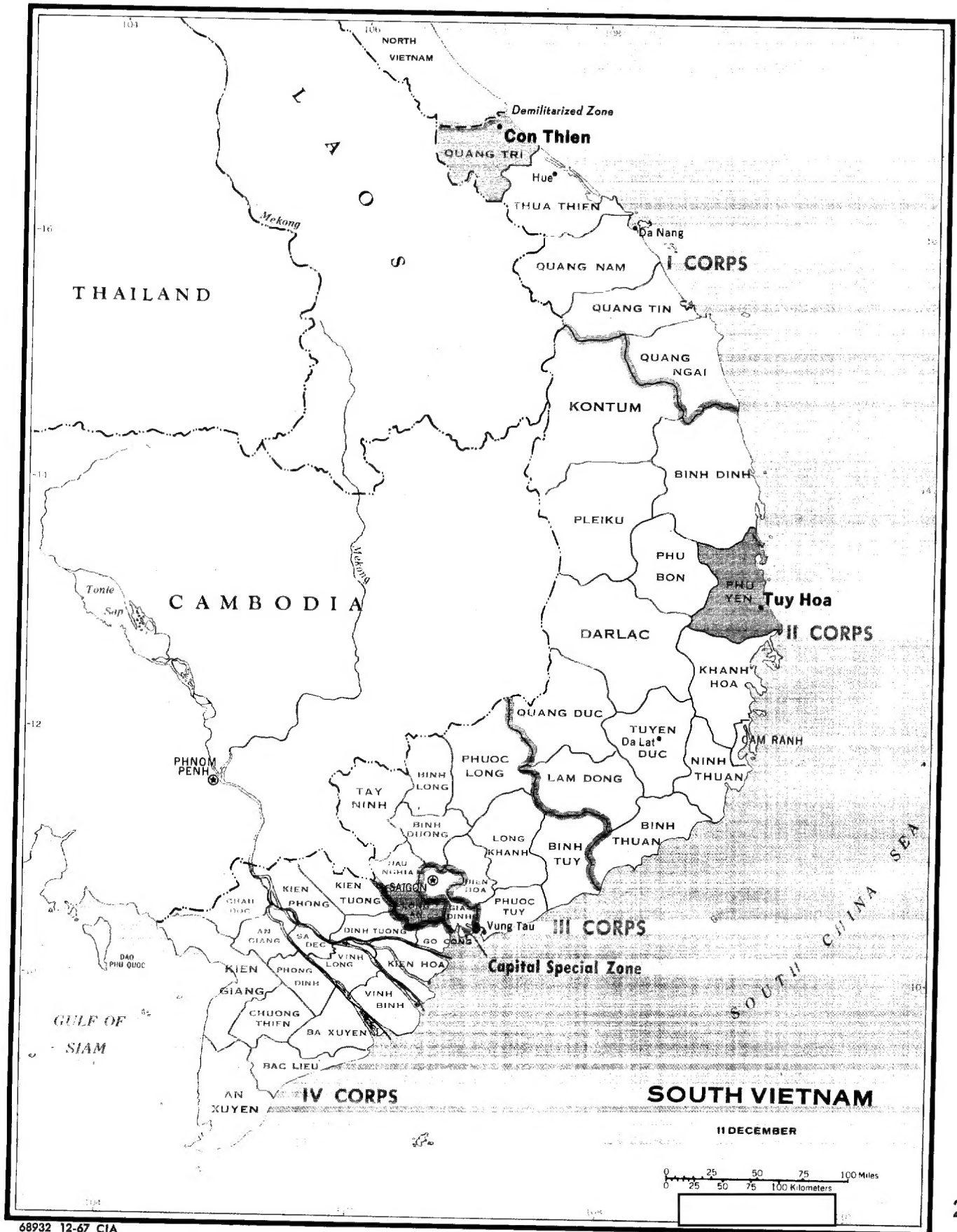
[redacted]
[redacted] Reports are circulating in Long An Province that Viet Cong cadre there are telling their subordinates that there will be a military standdown after Tet, to be followed by the establishment of a coalition government (Paras. 3-7).

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III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:
There is nothing of significance to report.

IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: The Soviets have officially protested any possible extension of the war into Cambodia and Laos (Paras. 1-2).



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I. MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. A Viet Cong force estimated to be a full battalion assaulted positions of a US 9th Infantry Division company in Long An Province in the Mekong Delta just before dawn on 10 December. Simultaneously, two other 9th Division installations in nearby villages were hit by rifle, grenade, and machine gun fire. The attacks left 7 Americans and 15 Viet Cong dead and 46 US soldiers wounded.

2. In the main ground attack, part of the enemy force succeeded in penetrating the perimeter of the US company, but was driven back after approximately two hours of close-in fighting. Reaction forces from the 9th Division were deployed along possible enemy withdrawal routes, but no contact was made with the Viet Cong force.

3. Fighting elsewhere in the country was generally light on 10-11 December. One US Marine was killed and 23 were wounded by enemy artillery barrages just below the Demilitarized Zone during the afternoon of 10 December. Airborne US observers directing air strikes north of Con Thien on 9 December reported 16 North Vietnamese were killed in a strike. [REDACTED]

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Developments in Phu Yen Province

4. [REDACTED] reveal that Viet Cong leaders felt their control was deteriorating seriously in central Phu Yen Province last summer. [REDACTED] stated that the allied military take-over in Phu Yen had "generally broken up" the Viet Cong revolutionary structure. [REDACTED] government pacification program and indicated that it had succeeded in winning over many Viet Cong sympathizers and guerrillas. As a result [REDACTED] compliance with the 1967 campaign would be difficult.

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5. [] a political report of the southern subregion of Viet Cong Military Region 5, provides further evidence that the enemy was discouraged by the situation in Phu Yen last summer. The report indicates that enemy forces in the province were short of food and other supplies and had procured them forcibly. This further alienated the people.

6. These reports may explain the apparent high priority which the Communists have given to their operations in Phu Yen this fall. Security conditions in the province took a decided turn for the worse in late August when Viet Cong forces launched a number of coordinated attacks on small government outposts and an element of the North Vietnamese 95th Regiment attacked a government Revolutionary Development complex less than six miles from Tuy Hoa, the provincial capital. In a series of sharp clashes near Tuy Hoa just prior to and following the national elections on 3 September, 21 hamlets were overrun. US officials estimated that the Revolutionary Development program was set back three months. Enemy activity continued at a relatively high level in October and November.

7. [] that both the North Vietnamese 95th Regiment and Viet Cong units in Phu Yen have received large numbers of North Vietnamese replacements this year, as have other enemy units deployed in the heavily populated coastal plain which extends along the length of South Vietnam. The Communists have attempted to maintain a high tempo of activity in these areas and in the Mekong Delta in conjunction with large-scale battles along the country's isolated, interior borders.

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Evidence of VC Leadership Problems in South Vietnam

8.

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] the use of North Vietnamese cadre in the South.

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[redacted] assigned to various provincial units in the four coastal provinces of Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, and Phu Yen. [redacted] the Viet Cong had requested that these officers be sent from North Vietnam because of a shortage of qualified cadre.

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9.

[redacted]
[redacted] all of the officers except one in the Binh Dinh headquarters were regroupees.

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10. The assignment of North Vietnamese personnel to local force units, provincial staffs, and other elements of the Communist infrastructure in South Vietnam makes it difficult to locate replacements once they arrive in South Vietnam. The assignment of 30 North Vietnamese officers to provincial duties also illustrates that although the North Vietnamese are having difficulty in training adequate leadership personnel for their forces, the Viet Cong are in even worse shape in this department and in many cases must rely on the North Vietnamese.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

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Viet Cong in Long An Reportedly Predicting Early Peace

3. Viet Cong cadre and unit commanders in Long An Province have reportedly been telling their subordinates and the elders of Communist-controlled villages since early November that all Communist offensive operations in Long An will be stopped after the Tet holidays in late January. Such a standdown allegedly would then be followed by the establishment of a coalition government with the full participation of the National Liberation Front.

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25X1 4. [] as a result of Communist assurances to their troops and other subordinates that they will receive positions of responsibility in the new government, the Chieu Hoi program in the province has been "almost nullified." Rallier figures from the province show a return of 59 in October and only 39 in November.

25X1 [] a failure by the Communists to follow through on these promises will result in "chaos" among Viet Cong soldiers and supporters and mass defections among other than hard-core elements.

5. Although the establishment of a coalition government has been treated in a number of recently captured documents and has received new emphasis since the revised Liberation Front program was issued in September, in no case has there been any specific target date or any indication that such a government is anticipated in the near future. There is considerable documentary and other evidence, in fact, that the Communists are preparing to continue fighting throughout 1968.

6. It is possible that, in receiving indoctrination on both the Communist "winter-spring campaign" and on the coalition theme, Viet Cong cadre in Long An have misinterpreted what are actually longer range Communist plans. One training document captured last month and believed to have been used by a local force unit in Long An alleged that the "revolution" in the South would be concluded in 1967-1968. Local cadre may also have distorted the plans themselves in an effort to boost their subordinates' morale. The differing versions of the coalition theme within Long An itself--reported by some informants to refer to a countrywide coalition and by others as scheduled to be put in effect only in III and IV Corps--strongly suggest that Viet Cong cadre are adding their own interpolations as they think necessary.

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7. It is also possible that [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] information reflects local South Vietnamese efforts to rationalize the drop in Chieu Hoi figures. Chieu Hoi returns throughout the country have been declining for several months, and the decline predates the reported Viet Cong predictions in Long An of an early coalition government.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. The Soviet Union on 10 December issued an official statement expressing concern over possible expansion of the Vietnam war into Laos and Cambodia. A statement issued by TASS condemned alleged "plans" being made in the US to extend military operations into the two countries and asserted that any US attempts to aggravate the situation in Southeast Asia would be "strongly rebuffed by peace-loving nations of the world."

2. The TASS pronouncement records at a more authoritative level the foreboding note sounded in Soviet media over the past several weeks, apparently evoked by extensive speculation in the US press that the US might be contemplating such action. It is also certainly designed to trade on the anxieties of Cambodia's Prince Sihanouk.

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